DISABLED PERSONS
Commission

Annual Report

Nova Scotia
Disabled Persons Commission

2002 - 2003

NOVA SCOTIA

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"I loved every minute of my twenty months with the Disabled Persons Commission. The Staff were superb, the Commissioners a pleasure to work with and the Government helpful and appreciative".

Judy Hughes, Executive Director
Disabled Persons Commission

1. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am pleased to present the 2002-03 Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission. The Report gives a brief overview of some of the issues and initiatives that have been on the Agenda of the Disabled Persons Commission. It also marks the end of a year of change with the completion of some very worthwhile work.

Some important issues and initiatives concerning Nova Scotians with disabilities that have been on the Commission's Agenda over the past year and a half are listed below. These are areas we have investigated and where our Commission and Commissioners played a lead or major role working in partnership with numerous government and private community groups.

INITIATIVES:

- Partnered with TeamWork Co-operative in the establishment of a Business Leadership Network in HRM and assisting to establish similar Networks in Sydney and elsewhere in the Province.
- Worked with the Nova Scotia Community College to begin the development of an Accessibility Auditor course.
- Hosted a National forum of Advisory Councils in 2003, which brought together counterparts from coast to coast to share ideas and experience.
- Partnered with the Seniors Citizens Secretariat and Provincial Legions to address the issue of self-service gasoline stations which do not meet the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Began the second round of the Archie Kaiser Proposal process.
- Participated in a Symposium addressing the issues of disability for provincial institutions of higher learning.
- Worked with the Nova Scotia Rural Team to include rural disability issues and concerns
- Developed a Report on a Wheelchair Recycling Program in conjunction with our Community Partners.
- Collaborated with Nova Scotia Community Colleges and other Community Partners to develop a report on the need for Interpreters in Nova Scotia.
- Participated in 3rd annual Inclusive Transportation Conference and Showcase 2003 that explored

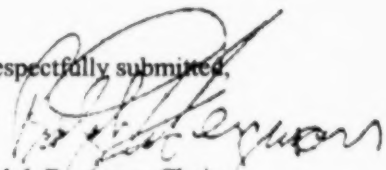
issues of transportation for persons with disabilities

- Hosted Roundtable discussion on the Merits of a Disability Act in Nova Scotia
- Developed a Resource Directory of Government Programs and Services for Persons with Disabilities in Nova Scotia
- Developed a Statistical Report of Persons with Disabilities in Nova Scotia
- Reported to the Minister of Transportation on the potential impact of soft tissue injury on persons with disabilities in the new Automobile Insurance legislation.
- Collaborated with Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities (LEO) to improve the structure of PAA-NS (Partnership for Action Awareness week in Nova Scotia).

Since the last Annual Report, the Commission has a new lead Minister, the Honourable David Morse, Minister of Community Services and Minister responsible for the Disabled Persons Commission. There are two Ministers new to the Co-ordinating Committee of Ministers, the Honourable Barry Barnet, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and the Honourable Kerry Morash, Minister of Environment and Labour. The Commission has worked this past year under the able direction of Executive Director, Judy Hughes. Under Judy's watch, the Commission developed a Strategic Plan and operationalized it to extend Commission interest and influence into the many areas where disability touches the lives of Nova Scotians living with disabilities.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of all members of the Commission and of our fine staff for their work on behalf of persons with disabilities. I also wish to thank Commission member, Joanne Bond who has moved to the Department of Education and to welcome Andre McConnell, who will represent the Department of Community Services. I would particularly like to acknowledge the contributions and leadership of Judy Hughes over the past year and a half. Her talents, commitment and hard work have and will continue to be greatly appreciated. Thank you one and all.

Respectfully submitted,



Ralph Ferguson, Chair
Disabled Persons Commission

"As a Board member of the Disabled Persons Commission I value the experience of meeting with a diverse group of private and public members who share in the commitment to provide better programs and services to the disability communities in Nova Scotia." *Heather Chandler, Commissioner*
Disabled Persons Commission

2. THE DISABLED PERSONS COMMISSION

2.1 Background

The Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission was established under the authority of the Disabled Persons Commission Act in 1989. The Act provides a mechanism to ensure a framework exists, whereby Nova Scotians with disabilities can advise policy-makers and program developers on the needs of persons with disabilities. The Act provides a mechanism for persons with disabilities to become policy advisors on issues and concerns which directly affect their lives.

The Disabled Persons Commission is comprised of twelve members, the majority of whom mustbe persons with a disability or are representative of the community. The remaining members of the Commission are chosen from among government departments which deliver programs that directly affect persons with disabilities. Each Commission member is appointed for a two year term and the Commission members elect the Chairperson, who must be a representative of the community and a person with a disability.

In making appointments to the Commission, the Governor-in-Council attempts to ensure that members of the Commission represent the various regions of the Province.

Also, each member of the Commission is an independent representative and does not represent only the concerns of one disability.

2.2 Co-ordinating Committee of Ministers

The Disabled Persons Commission is primarily responsible to the Government of Nova Scotia, through the Co-ordinating Committee of Ministers. The Chairperson of this Co-ordinating Committee is the Minister responsible for reporting on disabled persons, the Minister of Community Services, the Honourable David Morse. Membership on the Co-ordinating Committee is comprised of Departments that have a direct stake in provision of services for persons with disabilities.

The following Departments are represented on the Co-ordinating Committee of Ministers:

Honourable David M. Morse	Minister of Community Services
Honourable Angus MacIsaac	Minister of Health
Honourable Jamie Muir	Minister of Education
Honourable Ron Russell	Minister of Transportation and Public Works
Honourable Kerry Morash	Minister of Environment and Labour
Honourable Barry Barnet	Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

"I believe as a Commission we are making a difference in the Disability Community. Commission staff and Commission members are very responsible and professional. I learned a lot from the expertise of others. I enjoyed having fun while accomplishing much with fellow Commissioners." *John Kyle, Commissioner*
Disabled Persons Commission

"It is inspiring to review what has been accomplished by the Commission in the past four years while being intimidated by what must still be done for persons with disabilities to achieve full inclusion". *Shaun Whittleton, Commissioner*
Disabled Persons Commission

3. STRATEGIC PLAN

The Disabled Persons Commission is pleased to present its first formal Three Year Strategic Plan which will guide the Commission's activities from April 1, 2003 through March 31, 2006. The seven strategic goals identified within the Strategic Plan will serve to focus the efforts of Commission members and staff to achieve the Commission's mission, vision and legislated mandate. Each of the seven goals is described in detail to provide the rationale and measurable outcomes.

At the end of March, 2004, using the Operational Plan, the Commission staff will report to the Commission on progress achieved within the first year of the plan. An Operational Plan for the 2004-05 fiscal year will then be developed to reflect emerging action priorities related to the strategic goals.

The Disabled Person's Commission welcomes any feedback the general public and stakeholder organizations have to offer on the Strategic Plan and related operational activities. We are confident that the process of developing and monitoring the plan will greatly assist the Commission in our mission to champion the social and economic inclusion of citizens with disabilities.

DPC MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

The Mission of the Disabled Persons Commission is to champion the social and economic inclusion of citizens with disabilities.

We do this by providing information on services available to persons with disabilities, increasing public awareness, and advising the provincial government on policy and programs.

We help to ensure that the provincial government is accountable by facilitating communication and collaboration both within government, and between government and the community.

Our Vision is that all Nova Scotians and their elected representatives value the capabilities of persons with disabilities and work together to remove barriers that prevent social and economic inclusion. This vision will be achieved when:

1. It is understood that the accommodation of persons with disabilities creates a better world for everyone;

2. There is a "level playing field" which provides equal opportunity and the means for people with disabilities to achieve their full potential for independence;

3. Contributions of people with disabilities as an economic force are known and recognized;

4. Diversity is valued and celebrated;

5. People with disabilities are active members of decision-making bodies at all levels of government, corporate and voluntary sector;

6. People with disabilities and their families/support networks identify, choose and manage required services;

7. There is universal access to disability supports and services; and

8. Barrier free access to the physical environment, information and services is ensured for all.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND RELATED OUTCOMES

Strategic Goal 1: Collaborative Partnerships

Goal Statement: To form collaborative partnerships within government, and with corporate, voluntary, and academic organizations to pursue the objectives of the Disabled Persons Commission.

Rationale: The Disabled Persons Commission has a mandate to facilitate communication and cooperation within the provincial government and between the government and community. It also has a mandate to ensure that the interests of all persons with disabilities are represented to the provincial government. To pursue these mandates effectively the Commission has fostered a high degree of collaboration in relation to government and community based organizations. Collaborative partnerships with corporate and academic organizations are also important to ensure that the mission of the Disabled Persons Commission is fulfilled.

Strategic Goal 2: Awareness and Access

Goal Statement: To make the Disabled Persons Commission known and accessible to persons with

disabilities, people within government, and the general public.

Rationale: All Nova Scotians should be aware of the Disabled Persons Commission, its mandate, and activities undertaken within the past year.

Strategic Goal 3: Economic Development Strategy

Goal Statement: To facilitate the creation of a community economic development strategy that incorporates the economic participation of persons with disabilities.

Rationale: One in five adult Nova Scotians (20.1%) is a person with a disability, and this population represents a significant economic force in terms of both productive capacity and purchasing power. It is time that this force is recognized and represented within discussions on the economic future of the province.

Strategic Goal 4: Disability Legislation Framework

Goal Statement: To develop a consensus among provincial organizations representing persons with disabilities and all provincial political parties on the merits of establishing a provincial disability act.

Rationale: A provincial disability act has the potential to develop a consistent definition of disability and operational principles for all provincial government programs provided to persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia. Legislation also could resolve the ongoing issue of entitlement to services and supports. To date there has been no systematic discussion of this issue among government or community stakeholders in Nova Scotia.

Strategic Goal 5: Accessibility

Goal Statement: To promote barrier free access to the physical environment of provincial buildings and provincially regulated transportation systems.

Rationale: An Inter-departmental Committee has produced a Report entitled "Towards an Accessibility Policy for Nova Scotia" which has recommended that legislation be created to ensure that all buildings

owned or leased by the provincial government are physically accessible. The legislation needs to be enacted and progress on subsequent upgrading of owned and leased buildings monitored over time. The parameters pf the Community Transportation Assistance Program needs to be expanded to increase the number of users and geographical access.

Strategic Goal 6: Quality of Life Incentives

Goal Statement: To increase incentives within provincial government programs to offset the costs of disability.

Rationale: Persons with disabilities represent 20.1% of the adult population of Nova Scotia and almost 50% of people receiving income assistance are persons with disabilities. Living in poverty is the reality for the majority of Nova Scotians with disabilities and a variety of financial incentives are desperately needed to offset the additional costs associated with disability.

Strategic Goal 7: Continuum of Support from Education to Employment

Goal Statement: To build linkages between the public education system, post-secondary training, and employment.

Rationale: People with disabilities as a group traditionally have had lower than average educational levels and earn lower than average wages. In addition, individuals with disabilities who have successfully completed post-secondary education are often under-employed. The public services responsible for education and employment supports are not systematically coordinated in their planning or delivery. This lack of integration results in duplication of effort, service gaps, and poorly conceived and executed supports. Increased collaboration and structures for long-term coordination will help to ensure that there is a seamless continuum of supports to enable children and adults with disabilities to reach their greatest potential.

"Serving as a Board member has been a very worthwhile experience as it has given me a broader perspective of issues faced by persons with disabilities. The promotion of community economic development should be a continuing initiative with the Disabled Persons Commission especially since so many persons with disabilities are beginning to make contributions both economically and socially. The development of the Business Leadership Network is a really innovative concept and with the Disabled Persons Commission partnering with other key stakeholders, it will give persons with disabilities a stronger voice in the employment realm.

Joanne Caron, Commissioner
Disabled Persons Commission

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

RATIONALE

The following information offers insight into the present reality of the majority of the disability community and will provide a particular look at where we need to go when we speak of this population moving from dependance to independence and self sufficiency. It is the Commission's hope that it will be possible to devise a five year strategy within a partnership framework with the Ministry of Economic Development and others; to see this community as a "Hidden Labor Force" and begin to thread the process and progress necessary to achieve this goal.

ECONOMIC INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NOVA SCOTIA
STATISTICS FOR NOVA SCOTIA FROM STATISTICS CANADA 2001

(a) As of 2001, 20.1% of adult Nova Scotians consider themselves to have a disability, compared to the national rate of 14.6%. Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disability in the country.

(b) 60 % of persons with disabilities (87,310 persons) in Nova Scotia are 15-64 years of age.

(c) Mobility disabilities account for 32% of the total disabilities in Nova Scotia. Agility accounts for 30%, Hearing for 14%, Visual for 5%, Speech for 3% and Other for 15%.

(d) Severity of Disability for Nova Scotians 15 years of age and over- 34.1% mild, 26.4% moderate, 26.4% severe and 13.1% very severe.

(e) According to the Canada Pension Plan, 23,202 persons with a disability are receiving a disability

pension in Nova Scotia in 1999.

(f) Almost half of the Income Assistance recipients (14,547) of Nova Scotia are persons with a disability.

(g) The most recent Labour force activity for Nova Scotians with disabilities (1996) aged 15 to 64, consisted of 18.1% unemployed with only 17.1% being employed as compared to 59.8% of persons without disabilities.

(h) 78.4% of persons with a disability were not in the Labour force in Nova Scotia 1996 as compared to 31.3% of persons without a disability.

(i) 21.1% of the male population with a disability in Nova Scotia were employed as compared to only 14.5% for females.

(j) Employed people with disabilities reporting the impact of disability on employment, 25% were refused employment, 22% were dismissed, and 17% were refused promotion.

(k) 4.9 % of Nova Scotians aged 15 to 64 years with disabilities have a university degree compared with 13.5 % of Nova Scotians without disabilities.

(l) The average income of Nova Scotians with disabilities age 15 to 64 in 1990 was only $18, 160.00 and 48.5 % had an income of less than $15,000 per year.

PURPOSE OF STRATEGY

(a) Sectorial Planning

(b) Strengthening the relationship between entrepreneurs with disabilities and the regional development authorities.

(c) Encouraging and promoting small and medium size businesses to become accessible through a grant and/or tax rebate process.

(d) Establishing a mechanism enabling The Disabled Persons Commission to become an integral part of the economic planning process for Nova Scotia to ensure the inclusion and participation of

persons with disabilities (20.1%) in the economic prosperity of this province.

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

1. The Rural Dialogue Strategy could be used to lay the ground work for the development of an overall framework for action.

2. Advisory Council on the Status of Women's Roundtable on Women's Economic Security.

3. The Federal Status of Women Canada is willing to entertain a conversation on proposal development to do a needs assessment within the Women's Disability Community.

4. Health Promotion Canada may be a viable source given the rationale and need.

5. HRDC through LLMP (Local Labour Market Partnership) and the LMDA (Labour Market Development Agreement) would also be very helpful in moving this agenda forward.

6. Business Leadership Network is a group of business people talking and promoting amongst themselves the advantages of hiring this sector of people. This is successfully working in other parts of Canada and the United States. I have had preliminary conversations with BLN founder Roger VanLieshout, conversations with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the eleven Community Partnerships working with the Disability Community around employment issues through HRDC resources.

7. We are working with the Affirmative Industry Association of Nova Scotia and The Andrew Peacock Fund. This group has been established for the past year and has commanded significant dollars to date and looking to raise Five Million for the sole purpose of helping people with disabilities start new businesses.

THE BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK

RATIONAL

- Changing demographic trends, coupled with technology advances have revolutionized the nature of work.
- The skill set required in many types of occupations has brought into focus the urgent need to expand the available pool of qualified labour.
- Few employers would dispute the reality of an impending labour crisis.
- If Nova Scotia is to compete and remain economically viable, employers need to expand their

recruitment practices by targeting new or under-utilized labour resources.

- Clientele need to be marketed in more creative and effective ways to maximize the opportunity for employment.
- It makes good business sense for the labour force to reflect the diversity of communities.
- For equity employers it gives them an opportunity to fulfill their diversity targets.
- Matching an untapped labour pool to an under resourced labour market given the aging population, urbanization, advanced technology, etc. Statistics Canada reports 20.1% of adult Nova Scotians live with a self-identified disability and 78% of People with Disabilities are not in the labour force. There are 149,000 (152,000 including children) people with disabilities living in Nova Scotia and 60% are between the ages of 16 and 65 which is a significant labour force.
- Approximately 50% of Social Assistance recipients are People with Disabilities.

HISTORY OF THE BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK

- In 1994 the Business Leadership Network (BLN) was developed in the United States by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.
- Currently there are over forty Business Leadership Networks throughout the United States and Canada with BLN's established in Halifax, Winnipeg and Vancouver since 1998.
- The focus of the BLN is to market the benefits of hiring qualified individuals with disabilities.
- Through it's activities, the BLN addresses employment issues faced by People with Disabilities.
- The BLN is committed to overcoming employment barriers for People with Disabilities.

THE COMMITMENT

- Developing a network of corporate leadership and partnerships between business and community organizations in promoting the employment of people with disabilities.
- Developing a network of businesses that support and educate other businesses to hire, retain and improve employment opportunities and customer service for people with disabilities.
- Creating recognition for proactive business leaders and companies.
- Providing consultation and support for employers, enabling them to make more effective use of an under-utilized resource: people with disabilities.

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

- Access to a central body that networks with many community agencies and provides exposure to a pool of hundreds to thousands of applicants.
- A network of employers and agencies sharing information on common disability related employment issues.

- Improved access to a broader customer base, i.e. people with disabilities and their families and friends.
- Information about job accommodations including barrier-free design principles and technology.
- Opportunities to provide training and work experience for people with disabilities.
- Resource materials on diversity training, hiring and supervising people with disabilities

BENEFITS TO COMMUNITY

- Access to employer's human resource departments and potential job openings for people with disabilities.
- Feedback from a network of employers who provide information on common employment issues.
- The opportunity for mentoring and career advice from employers for interested candidates.
- Increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- A means to promote a better understanding of employment issues facing persons with disabilities to businesses and government agencies.
- Raised awareness of the potential and abilities of people with disabilities.

THE NOVA SCOTIA PROCESS

- The Disabled Persons Commission approached TEAM Work Co-operative to develop a BLN in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) because of its strong relationship with several business sectors i.e. hospitality, information technology, Atlantic wholesalers, and the banking industry through the establishment and implementation of skill training programs within these sectors.
- The Disabled Persons Commission was committed to developing a prototype that could be presented throughout the Province as a complimentary process to job development and to fulfill an integral part of the Commission's Economic Development Strategy.
- This concept went to the TEAM Work Co-operative strategic planning process and became one of their end goals.
- A Committee was created to oversee the development of the process. TEAM Work Co-operative also lent a staff position to this initiative.
- The Committee contacted Colorado native, Roger VanLieshout to enlist his expertise in the development and implementation of this endeavour. Roger VanLieshout has been developing BLN's in Canada and the United States and considered a leader in this field.
- Following consultation with Mr. VanLieshout, the Committee identified and invited key HRM CEO's, Provincial, Federal and Municipal representatives, Community representatives and Educators to a luncheon at which Roger VanLieshout was the keynote speaker.
- Thirty people attended the June 2003 Luncheon and each committed to invite five additional colleagues to the October launch of the Halifax BLN.

- Staff interviewed the luncheon attendees to advance the discussion and to seek commitment to a Steering Committee.
- Fifteen business leaders came forward to constitute a Steering Committee.
- It was agreed that the Executive Directors of TEAM Work and the Disabled Persons Commission would act as co-chairs of the Committee for the first six months.
- A Strategic Planning Process was established and work began on a three year business plan.
- The successful October launch began with one hundred and twenty five business leaders attending a breakfast meeting that opened the TEAM Work sponsored day long event "Employment Access 2003" for employers, service providers and people living with disabilities.
- Keynote speakers were Lynn Kirkbride of Synergy speaking to the advantages of Business Leadership Networks and motivational speaker, Norman Konc of British Columbia.
- The Steering Committee agreed on a Chair for the Steering Committee and established a subcommittee structure to implement the business plan.

SUCCESSES TO DATE:

Each member has committed to the hiring of at least one person with a disability this year.

Speaking to at least one business group using a public presentation, developed by staff and signed off by the Steering Committee.

A commitment was made to raise funds to be matched by ATV for a BLN promotional video.

"The attempt to develop a disability act is an interesting idea and I look forward to a continued dialogue on this issue". *Joanne Caron, Commissioner*
Disabled Persons Commission

5. DISABILITY ACT DIALOGUE

BACKGROUND

For the past two years individuals and groups have been discussing the merits and possible risks of developing a Disability Act in Nova Scotia. The main theme of this conversation is whether this process brings one from personal and/or political will to entitlement.

In the summer of 2003, Carol Evans from Metro Community Housing contracted Dalhousie third year law student, Leah Tinkman to complete a literature review and analysis on Disability Legislation on an International level.

The Disabled Persons Commission agreed to host a Disability Act dialogue in the year 2003-2004. In an effort to speak with people who had struggled with the pros and cons of such legislation, contact with made with Dr. David Lepofsky and Carole Riback of Ontario who were involved in the promotion of an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Dr. Lepofsky and Ms. Riback joined the Roundtable Discussion through a video feed which allowed everyone present to participate in the discussion.

The full day Roundtable discussion was attended by seventy-five people from across the Community representing all disabilities. Dr. Lepofsky and Ms. Riback spoke for the first hour outlining the Ontario process, followed by a video presentation *"Please don't come ... it's not accessible"* that voiced the concerns and outlined the needs of people living with disabilities and their thoughts around a Disability Act.

MERITS OF A DISABILITY ACT

- political will
- focus on a plan
- continuity of services
- full citizenship
- opportunity to negotiate needs
- create a voting force

- everyone working towards a common goal
- build solidarity between disabilities
- guarantee of advocacy
- funding to do research
- increased labor force involvement & employment supports
- remove barriers
- all of society will benefit
- increased provisions of goods and services that assist daily living
- provision of supports– financial assistance to accommodate
- definition of disability

RISKS OF A DISABILITY ACT

- standards may reduce innovation
- entitlement lists must be complete or open
- exclusion via definition
- may promote litigation
- the Act must have teeth
- losing gains through existing legislation
- increased taxes
- government may say "no" or could reverse legislation
- ineffective enforcement
- could be divisive within and among disability groups
- exemptions may weaken the Act
- feasibility of accessibility
- length of time may weaken movement
- perceived negative costs
- could impact organizations ability to fund-raise, or core funding
- may not get public/tax payer buy-in

CURRENT SITUATION

The decision has been left on hold until a smaller group can do some more study and research of the work to date. An Ad Hoc Committee of fifteen people has been established to meet and crystalize the intent of the group, establish some time frames and to identify the work necessary to move forward. This group is also tasked with distilling the research to date and to bring this information back to the larger group. The construct of this group will be provincial in nature, cross disability, organizations, individuals & families, champions, people with expertise in research, legislation & communications, open-ended and non-partisan.

The Commission will host another meeting in the Spring with the Ad Hoc Committee. The Commission sees its role as one of facilitation, co-ordination, providing a link to Government and part of the public consultation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Dialogue on the merits & risks will continue within the Community until a decision is made to go forward or not.

2. The Cross Disability Community will lead this discussion and process.

3. The Disabled Persons Commission will keep the Coordinating Committee of Ministers apprised of the process.

"The Disabled Persons Commission is a great source of information both on a provincial and national scale. I look to the Commission as an opportunity to network and partner with my colleagues (staff and Commission members) and as an opportunity to improve every aspect of Persons with Disabilities and their lives (professional or personal)."

Joanne Caron, Commissioner
Disabled Persons Commission

6. PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

The framework for this conference was, **" *In Unison - Five years later*".**

The Conference began on September 21st 2003 with a meet and greet Sunday evening hosted by the Coordinating Committee of Ministers. It was well attended and included a fine turn-out from the Nova Scotia Disability Community. The Honourable David M. Morse, Minister of Community Services and Minister responsible for the Disabled Persons Commission, brought greetings from the Premier and spent time meeting and mingling with the group.

Participants were:

Rob Loughheed and Terry Keyko, Alberta,
Barry Schmidl and Anne Christopher, Prince Edward Island
Randy Dickinson and Gary Comeau, New Brunswick
Sean Wiltshire, Newfoundlandand
Mary Ennis, Newfoundland
Michele-Andre Roy, Quebec
Jan Zawilski and Jeff Brown, Ontario

and from Nova Scotia:

Judy Hughes
Ralph Ferguson
Jane Warren (Commissioner),
John Kyle (Commissioner),
Shaun Whittleton (Commissioner)
Burke MacCallum, DPC staff
Kathy Berrigan, DPC staff

Regrets were received from the Yukon, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nunivut, North West Territories.

September 22nd began with a roundtable with the participants sharing what was happening in their part of the Country.

Each participant presented progress reports based on the ***In Unison*** Report. It was an interesting process that allowed us to compare one end of the Country to the other and to see how the Disability Community is dealing with similar issues across Canada. We were very interested to hear some of the innovative methods Provinces are using to deal with the concerns of this population.

The Afternoon of September 22nd was designed to up-date participants on Federal Programs.

PRESENTERS WERE:

Mp Wendy Lill
As a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Disabilities, Ms. Lill spoke to the Committee's work on the Disability Tax Credit and Canadian Disability Benefits.

Pauline Myre
Office of Disability Issues / HRDC. Ms. Myre gave an overview of the Federal programs within HRDC and the Employment Assistance for People with Disability Program (EAPD). Accompanying Pauline Myre was Buddy Walzak, Nova Scotia's lead person on EAPD.

Ray Cohen
Editor of Abilities Magazine, presented on the emerging database *"Access Guide Canada."*.

Mary Ennis
Council of Canadians with Disabilities. Ms. Ennis outlined the purpose of this Organization and some of the Initiatives.

June Hooper
New Brunswick March of Dimes. Ms. Hooper addressed the establishment of a Federal Disability Commissioner.

The following morning September 23rd, the Nova Scotia Disability Community spoke to their unique situations, concerns and programs. The entire group participated in "The Emerging Issues" and identified the following:

- the need for effective planning
- changing language to reflect capabilities
- the need to move the political agenda from *"tax dependent to tax payer"*
- the need to move towards true collaboration and the development of a unified voice within all sectors.
- continue to celebrate differences
- develop leadership especially in the youth population
- more involvement within the business community and visualizing community as an untapped economic force
- the merits of a Disability Act
- Federal Departments and National Organizations need direct connections to all Advisory Councils.
- the need for more statistical information and research so we can plan and make knowledge based decisions.

The afternoon of September 23rd 2003 examined, "Common Ground" issues and identified the following:

- coalition building
- assessment of the need for a Disability Act
- sharing information, networking and progress
- building on "Best Practices"
- engaging political leaders
- building new relationships and leadership
- become a part of provincial legislatures and/or the Federal Parliament
- maintain interprovincial relationships

"My involvement with the Disabled Persons Commission has enabled me to keep apprized of the key issues impacting persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia and has provided an excellent forum to network with other representatives from government, non-profit, and advocacy groups. The work accomplished by the Disabled Persons Commission is extremely important and its goals and objectives are greatly symbiotic to my Department".

Rene Frigault, Commissioner
Disabled Persons Commission

7. INTERPRETER SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

The Disabled Persons Commission was asked to participate in a review and re-assessment process of the original, *"Task Force Investigating the Need for a Visual Language Interpreter Training Program in Nova Scotia."* Since the completion of this report in February 1992, needs have escalated while resources have remained the same.

In partnership with Nova Scotia Community Colleges, Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians, Disabled Persons Commission, Maritime Association of Professional Sign Language Interpreters and the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority and under the Auspices of the Deafness Advocacy Association Nova Scotia, application was made to Human Resources Development Canada for the financial resources to carry out this research project. Kevin Schwenker & Associates were hired to carry out the study .

The Disabled Persons Commission is pleased to re-print the Executive summary of this project with the permission of Kevin Schwenker & Associates. The Report in its entirety is available by contacting the Disabled Persons Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / STUDY CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken to provide solid research respecting the supply and demand for Interpreters in Nova Scotia. The results and recommendations are intended to promote informed decisions and actions to ensure the availability of, and access to, professionally trained and qualified Interpreters. Implementation of the recommendations herein will ensure the fundamental right of Nova Scotians who are Deaf to have the opportunity to participate in every aspect of Nova Scotia life. The following

summarizes the study findings with respect to the parameters identified on the previous page.

The following key issues are identified and are explored in the report with respect to the supply of Interpreters in Nova Scotia; the qualifications required, the sources of trained/qualified interpreters, and the labour market issues of attrition, attraction and retention in Nova Scotia. Three other issues are also briefly noted; the presence of less than professionally qualified 'communication aides' acting in the role of Interpreters in the market place, the negative impact of a toxic work environment in Nova Scotia; and the possibility of ensuring quality control in the future through legislative regulation of the profession.

The primary driving factor with respect to demand of Interpreters in Nova Scotia is the number of Deaf who can sign. Having identified the numbers of Deaf consumers, demand for Interpreters is determined by the incidence of need in the key settings of education, employment and community interpreting (the latter including essential services in health, legal and mental health settings). Three additional The primary driving factor with respect to demand of Interpreters in Nova Scotia is the number of Deaf who can sign. Having identified the numbers of Deaf consumers, demand for Interpreters is determined by the incidence of need in the key settings of education, employment and community interpreting (the latter including essential services in health, legal and mental health settings). Three additional demand issues are briefly reviewed; meeting the needs of Deaf people in rural areas, the impacts of increased consumer education on demand, and a future with 24/7 interpreter services provision.

The study documents at length the qualifications and issues around qualifications in order to become an Interpreter. As a minimum entry level in Nova Scotia, the professional qualifications are graduation from a post secondary two to three year Sign Language Interpreter program which meets minimum industry recognized factors established by the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada and adherence to the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct established by AVLIC. Additional minimum competence qualifications include; excellent skills in English and American Sign Language, deep knowledge of Deaf and hearing culture and understanding of cross cultural dynamics, ability to relay emotions, and professional in appearance and behaviour. Beyond the minimum, this study documents the challenges and issues that require additional competencies to meet the wide variety of interpreting settings.

The number of trained and qualified Interpreters currently in Nova Scotia is determined to be 43 at the time of writing this report. Thirty-one are working full time for the Atlantic Provinces' Special Education Authority another 5 are working in post secondary education with the Nova Scotia Department of Education. With 36 full-time educational interpreters working with a similar number of Deaf persons, this leaves only 7 interpreters for all the other needs of Deaf people who sign in Nova Scotia – a woefully inadequate number to meet employment and community needs of a population estimated to be up to 3,000. In addition to increased numbers of professional qualified Interpreters required to serve the employment and other needs of the Deaf population in Nova Scotia, ongoing professional development needs are

identified that are essential to maintain and improve the qualifications of Interpreters serving in particular settings.

The study identifies that the key reasons for attrition revolve around compensation and working conditions.

Much attrition involved Interpreters moving to another province In addition, there are people who leave the profession for personal reasons, such as having a family and withdrawing from the labour market altogether. Almost without fail, Interpreters who graduate from the NSCC AEIP do work in the interpreting field for several years; however, the attrition rate over the past 10 years has been pretty consistent: a) around 4 interpreters per graduating class leave Nova Scotia to interpret elsewhere, and b) 3-4 interpreters per program leave the field of interpreting altogether.

The issue of attrition combined with the conclusions surrounding increasing demand have resulted in recommendations to increase the number of Interpreters being trained in Nova Scotia. This would involve a couple of key elements; improving the quality and number of potential candidates for the minimum two year post-secondary training program, and putting in place the teaching and other resources necessary to expand the number of training seats open.

Nova Scotia has had a little success in attracting Interpreters to Nova Scotia to work in the field of educational interpreting. The study was unable to pinpoint exact reasons for this attraction; however, it has certainly not been because of the compensation package (as higher compensation for educational interpreting exists in all provinces west of the Atlantic region). The study concludes that retention will be influenced by improving the total compensation packages available for professional Interpreters and improvement of the work environment in Nova Scotia through education of interpretation services clientele.

The number of Deaf people who can sign in Nova Scotia is the key factor driving Interpreter Demand. While difficult to establish with any authority due to the inadequacy of Statistics Canada research, the derived number of Deaf who can sign in Nova Scotia has been identified as being between 2300 and 3100 people. The age breakdown of this population cannot be ascertained with any certainty though it could be assumed to reflect the general population.

The Deaf in Nova Scotia face an extremely high unemployment rate. Statistics Canada notes provides a 1998 national rate of 37.5% of Deaf Canadians unemployment, compared to a national rate of 8.1%. A 1998 CAD study broke down the statistics by region and derived an unemployment rate of 49% in Nova Scotia, while the research carried out for this study found the rate to be 61%. The 'fully' employed rate in the 1998 CAD study (using Statistics Canada base numbers) was estimated to be 20.6%, while in Nova Scotia that rate was 17.65%. Underemployment rates complete the picture at 41.9% nationally and 33.3% in Nova Scotia in 1998.

There were three significant findings arising from this study with respect to the demand for Interpreters in the workplace. First, the profile of employment may be changing, with this study pointing to a 29% employment rate in Nova Scotia, which, using a similar sample size, shows a marked increase from the 1998 CAD study that found an employment rate of only 17.65%. Second, there are 12 Disability Partnership Committees in Nova Scotia with the direct mandate to increase the employment of all persons with disabilities and the study interviews with these groups indicated progress (reinforcing the statistical increase already noted). Third, employers indicated a commitment to find the funds to provide Interpreters to ensure better communications with Deaf persons in their employ. The results point to increased demand for Interpreters in employment situations.

The demand for interpreters by APSEA in the K-12 educational setting is predicted to continue for the foreseeable future. Projections for interpreter demand at the higher education level is for increased demand as those who have used interpreters during the K-12 years will require interpreters at the post-secondary level. The implementation of team interpreting at the post-secondary level (an issue which this study recommends be addressed) would immediately double the number of interpreters being used at this time as well.

The impact of educational interpreting will in turn impact demand in the employment market. Indeed, those who have used educational interpreters in K-12 and in College or University will then graduate to the workforce with a clear knowledge of the importance of Interpreters to their success. This will in turn push up demand for Interpreters in employment situations. A few post-secondary graduates could have a profound effect on Interpreter demand in Nova Scotia as professionals in the workforce, such as a single dentist or veterinarian, may require one or more full time Interpreters.

It is concluded in this study that the demand for Interpreters in the community setting will also increase substantially in the future for a number of reasons. Court decisions have decreed that persons with disabilities are to have access to Interpreters for government services, or any services paid for with government funds – which is already leading to increasing demand across most medical, legal and mental health settings. The only things holding back demand at this time are the awareness of Deaf and hearing consumers that access to interpretation services is a right of the Deaf, and the issue of Interpreter availability in rural areas.

The recommendations arising from this study address the following conclusions:

1) There is a need to increase the number of professionally trained and qualified Interpreters in Nova Scotia.

2) There is an ongoing need to upgrade and improve the skills of Interpreters to meet the needs of Deaf people in Nova Scotia.

3) There is a need to address some key issues in educational interpreting around the professionalism of interpretation services provided and the treatment of Interpreters as professionals within the educational system.

4) Deaf and hearing consumers of interpreter services need to be made aware of their rights and obligations and also educated on issues around the proper utilization of interpretation services. The amelioration of some uncomfortable aspects of Interpreter working conditions in Nova Scotia should be addressed as part of any solution to this conclusion.

5) The key issue in preventing further attrition of Interpreters in Nova Scotia is the need to address some form of adequate total compensation package for qualified, professional Interpreters with various levels of experience and ongoing professional development.

6) The needs of Deaf and hearing consumers in rural areas of Nova Scotia must be addressed.

"Serving on the Disabled Persons Commission has provided an opportunity to work with a group of people who are highly committed to disability issues. It has provided an opportunity to attempt to influence systems that can impact on the lives of people with disabilities in a very positive way".

Brian Tapper, Commissioner
Disabled Persons Commission

8. WHEELCHAIR RECYCLING PROGRAM

In 2003 the current Nova Scotia Government recommended the following commitment to a Wheelchair Recycling Demonstration Project over a four year period in the Provincial Government Blue Book:

Protecting What Nova Scotians Value:

"Establish in partnership with the Abilities Foundation and other organizations representing Nova Scotians with disabilities, a wheelchair recycling demonstration project for children 3-18 years of age".

BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2002, The Nova Scotia Disabled Persons' Commission and Abilities Foundation of Nova Scotia revisited past discussions around the need for a Wheelchair program for Nova Scotians with disabilities. Regular meetings were held involving the following stakeholder organizations:

Abilities Foundation
Canadian Paraplegics Association
Muscular Dystrophy Association
Multiple Sclerosis Society
Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Center
IWK Health Center
Canadian Red Cross Society
Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities

After reviewing disability statistics from Statistics Canada (PALS data), Nova Scotia programs, equipment demand, and program delivery criteria from other provinces, a demonstration Wheelchair Recycling Program for Children was thought to be the best approach

In March 2004, the Disabled Persons Commission completed a report entitled the "Wheelchair Recycling

Program" based on a collaborative effort of Government and community disability organizations which contained the following recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that a wheelchair program be established that would purchase new wheelchairs for children between 3 to 18 years of age for families that have insufficient funds available to purchase a wheelchair for their child.

- It is recommended that a wheelchair recycling database be established that would involve developing a catalogue of donated and surplus wheelchairs in Nova Scotia with the objective of providing contact information from the database to families in Nova Scotia requiring the use of a children' wheelchair.

- The Wheelchair Recycling Committee recommends that the Abilities Foundation of Nova Scotia administer the implementation, application approval process, and funding of wheelchairs under this program . In addition, the Abilities Foundation of Nova Scotia will provide an annual program evaluation consistent with the needs of Government and the Wheelchair Advisory Committee.

"I joined the Disabled Persons Commission to educate the policy makers, or try to, about the needs of the disabled population, especially the needs of disabled students, of the disabled on social assistance and of survivors of brain injury. It's a very slow process.

Jane Warren, Commissioner
Disabled Persons Commission

9. ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

BACKGROUND

Acquired brain injury is a growing health care concern in Nova Scotia. Acquired brain injury is a generic term referring to damage to the brain.

Damage to the brain occurs as the result of a traumatic or pathological injury and is not related to a congenital or a degenerative disorder.

In all cases, injuries to the brain result from bruising, tearing or bleeding into the soft tissues or as in the case of a non-traumatic injury (near drowning, strangulation or choking), events that interfere with oxygen supply to the brain.

An injury to the brain results in a range of physical, congenital and behaviourial problems, as well as problems which are emotional, social, educational and vocational in nature.

CURRENT SITUATION:

- Through medical advances and improvements in emergency services, people are surviving events that would not have been possible in the past.
- People are hospitalized for extended periods of time because of lack of community infrastructure.
- Community resources are lacking or do not exist to help people integrate back into their families and communities.
- Resources do not exist to support patients, families and medical professionals throughout the life of persons living with acquired brain injury
- It is estimated that, in Nova Scotia, between 600 and 700 persons suffer a brain injury each year (excluding non-hospital admissions and strokes).

- Individuals, communities, health care and agencies struggle to provide services to people living with acquired brain injuries as the result of inadequate, nonexistent and poorly coordinated approach to care.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Disabled Persons Commission of Nova Scotia recommends the design and implementation of a task force working from the previous report of August, 1999, to develop a framework for implementation to meet the needs of the acquired brain injury population.

2. Promote and prevention programs involving the community, government and private sector.

3. Collaboration with existing data collection systems to create a reliable registry to document the extent and breadth of situations affecting persons with acquired brain injury.

4. The Department of Community Services and Department of Health along with the Community could cost share a full-time position for the Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia.

5. Extend the rehabilitation unit stay to include a five day a week Outpatient program with appropriate Inpatient supports. As well, provide a navigator to coordinate discharge destinations and community supports.

6. Develop and provide a basic training package to educate service providers and other stakeholders to the care and appropriate response to this population within the Community College and other post secondary educational networks.

7. That brain injury be recognized as a separate and distinct physical disability requiring specific and separate supports and services.

"It is indeed a rewarding experience to be a member of the Disabled Persons Commission. We must continue to strive for accessibility and education in all aspects for the disabled, to enable them to lead a productive life to their maximum capacity".

Berkley Evans, Commissioner
Disabled Persons Commission

10. ARCHIE KAISER RESEARCH GRANT

In January 2002, a settlement was reached in a complaint by H. Archibald Kaiser against the Executive Council of Nova Scotia. Part of the agreement involved the government makings funds available to assist people with mental disabilities in gaining access to legal, education and other advocacy and access to justice services. The Government agreed to provide $90,000 over three years to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, to be allocated as determined by the Commission, in consultation with the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission, through a call for proposals from appropriate mental health associations and/or consumer advocacy groups for projects to accomplish some or all of the following objectives:

- Determine what services are presently available and how they could be better delivered to those most in need and to ensure that there is no duplication of any existing programs or services;
- Assist in providing public legal information on disability and equality issues;
- Develop a protocol with relevant stakeholders to ensure that information is available in hospitals and other applicable locations confirming rights and services available to mental health consumers in contact with the medical/justice systems;
- Assist the Provincial Government in understanding the needs of people with disabilities in law reform efforts; and,
- Engage in such other activities as determined by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission which promote the equality of people with disabilities.

In the fall of 2002, a proposal review committee established by Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and the Disabled Persons Commission awarded the first year funding of the Archie Kaizer Research Grant to reachAbility on a proposal entitled Voices in the First Person: An Investigation of the Needs and Issues of Mental Health Consumers and Organizations in Nova Scotia.

The final details of the reachAbility report are presently being completed and the report will be available from the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and the Disabled Persons Commission in the near future. In addition, the evaluation of the year two proposals are currently underway by the Archie Kaizer Review Committee.

"I have enjoyed my experience as a member of the Disabled Persons Commission. The partnership of government members and community representatives sets a very positive tone to identifying the priorities for change and the process towards implementation. Each commissioner is committed to the Commission's mandate and each provides complementary advice, support and counsel to its deliberations."

Dr. John Campbell, Commissioner
Disabled Persons Commission

11. PROVINCIAL ACCESS AWARENESS - NOVA SCOTIA / PAA-NS
"MANY PATHS, ONE JOURNEY" ACTIVITY REPORT 2003

The vision of equal citizenship for persons with disabilities is the guiding light of Partnership for Access Awareness Nova Scotia (PAA-NS). Established as a provincial committee when a national initiative came to an end a decade ago, PAA-NS works to educate members of the general public on the need, and arguably the right, for accessibility.

As the Mission of the Disabled Persons Commission (DPC) is "to champion the social and economic inclusion of citizens with disabilities," the close relationship between the two organizations is natural. The two organizations are on the same journey.

In keeping with the 2003 theme, "Many Paths, One Journey", the Disabled Persons Commission participated again in the 2003 Nova Scotia Access Awareness Week Activites. The Commission's major role was again around Provincial activities of the week.

ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK 2003 - MAY 25TH TO MAY 31ST

Through a Collaborative Partners Network and e-mail and phone contact, Communities were encouraged to pursue local celebrations and events.

PROCLAMATION CEREMONY

The Proclamation Ceremony held in the Red Room at Province House, Monday, May 26th marked the beginning of Access Awareness Week 2003. Hosted by the Disabled Persons Commission, the ceremony featured Ms. Sonja Wood, ECMA-nominated musician, aspiring politician and wheelchair user. Ms. Wood shared her beautiful voice in story and in song

Highlighted as well were personal testimonies from:

- Lauchie Rutt, Executive Director, Canadian Paraplegic Association
- Robert Gagnon, CNIB
- Frank O'Sullivan, Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians *and*
- Jen Powley, Chair of PAA-NS

For her years of advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities, Dr. Joan Cummings had recently been awarded the Queen's Medal. Dr. Cummings was presented with her medal during the Proclamation Ceremony by Tim Verney, CCRW, Board of Directors. Ms. Judith Ferguson, Assistant Deputy Minister of Community Services brought Greetings from the Province and presented the Proclamation signed by the Minister.

CITIZENSHIP FORUM, Wednesday, May 28th, 2003.

The Forum centred around the idea of networking and the need to build and sustain relationships with members of both the Disability Community and the Community at large to affect lasting change.

MEL HEBB HOURGLASS ACTION AWARDS

The Mel Hebb Hourglass Action Awards were presented at the Forum. The five recipients were honoured for their significant contributions to making our communities more inclusive. Those honoured were:

- Jennifer Gallant for her volunteer efforts on the Kendrick Commission
- Jackie Vacca for offering an integrated dance class 'Revolutions' for the past nine years at little or no cost to persons with disabilities (the troop performed at the Forum)
- The Glen Lovat Golf Club for providing an accessible golf Course and service enabling persons with mobility disabilities the opportunity to participate
- Sackville Sports Stadium for providing an MS Aquafit Class and friendly, accommodating staff trained on disability awareness
- The Old Orchard Inn for major renovations to two guest rooms in its facility that accommodates the needs of those who have mobility or hearing disabilities

Four Certificates of Merit were awarded:

- Halifax Metro Transit for the provision of ALF buses
- Mary Thompson, Manager of Customized Training, Nova Scotia Community College at the Burridge Campus, for the provision of services to persons with disabilities
- Wanda Harbin, Marine Atlantic for creating a Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee
- Assistive Technology Centre for the provision of services to improve accessibility to the

learning environment

SCHOLARSHIPS

Through the sponsorship of Royal Bank Financial, Scotiabank and Casino Nova Scotia, six scholarships of $1,000.00 each were awarded to Nova Scotian students with a disability entering a post-secondary institution of learning.

COMMUNITY PANEL DISCUSSION

PAA-NS ventured into new territory by holding a community panel discussion, featuring the Raging Grannies and with Costas Halevrasos of CBC Radio as moderator. Panelists, Claredon Robicheau, Chair of LEO, Bud Brown, Recreation Nova Scotia Board member, and Jerry Pye, MLA, Dartmouth South, presented admirably.

A NEW PATH: NOVA SCOTIA LEAGUE FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES (LEO)

Over the year, PAA-NS Committee members concluded that in order to increase the scope of its reach and the depth of its impact, PAA-NS needed to have the resources of a year round, established organization with a Provincial scope. In January, 2004, PAA-NS became a Standing Committee of LEO. PAA-NS will retain control of its own finances, it can draw from the energy, enthusiasm, knowledge and connections of a more established group.

"The Commission has allowed me to gain knowledge, and experience working with an extended Committee of Government. I feel that my input has been valued. I would like to thank the Minister of Community Services for appointing me and also to thank the Chairperson, Ralph Ferguson and all the Commissioners. I look forward to serving the Disabled population and the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia"

Bill Crawford, Commissioner
Disabled Persons Commission

12. DISABILITY IN NOVA SCOTIA

Definition of Disability

Most members of the general public would probably consider the meaning of the term disability quite obvious. In reality, however, disability is a complex phenomenon, with different meanings for different people. To some, disability simply means some type of medical condition resulting in physical or mental abnormality. To others, disability is characterized by an inability to do things that most other people can do. To still others, it means economic or social disadvantage because of environmental circumstances that can't accommodate physical or mental 'difference'. Each of these popularly understood meanings has some validity. Each by itself, however, fails to capture the full reality of disability.

Since 1981 untangling the complexities of defining disability has been a continuing priority for the World Health Organization. Its two decade old initiative to develop an internationally recognized definition of disability has resulted in the now much refined International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps. It became clear to the International Committee early on that disability could not be defined adequately except in the context of the underlying impairment and the resulting handicap. Separating and exploring the relationships between these three key components of the disability phenomenon has expanded our understanding of disability and opened doors to creating effective strategies for maximizing the potential of people with disabilities world wide.

Within the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps:

> Impairment means: an abnormality of bodily structure or organic function due to an underlying disease, trauma or medical condition.

Disability means: functional limitations, or inability or reduced ability to perform a 'normal' range of activities due to impairment.

Handicap means: disadvantages experienced by individuals because of the interaction of impairments and disabilities with the surrounding environment.

The central notion here is the interaction of impairments and disabilities with the environment. People with impairments do not necessarily have functional limitations or disabilities; and people with disabilities are not necessarily handicapped in their physical and social environments. For example, a person whose impairment is a serious facial disfigurement as a result of a fire. The disfigurement may have no impact at all on his or her ability to perform 'normal' activities (no disability). The individual may nonetheless experience a serious disadvantage (handicap) accessing employment in an employing organization where negative societal attitudes towards disfigurement prevail. By contrast, take the example of someone that has sustained a spinal cord injury in a diving accident and now uses a wheelchair for mobility. This individual clearly has both an impairment and a disability. Nonetheless, in an accessible and socially aware workplace where appropriate accommodations are available, the impairment and disability do not necessarily result in reduced capacity to access and maintain employment; that is, a handicap. Separating the three components of disability, then, and in particular highlighting the important role played by environmental responses to impairments and disabilities, has provided important insight into how we might harness the untapped potential of the disability population and thereby expand the pool of available labour.

A Statistical Profile from the 2001 PALS Survey

According to the most current figures available from the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) carried out by Statistics Canada (Table 1), there were 3,420,340 persons with disabilities in Canada over 15 years of age and 180,930 children with disabilities under 15 years of age. This represents 14.6 percent of the adult Canadian population and 3.2 percent of all children.

The comparable figures for Nova Scotia in 2001 were 146,000 adults with disabilities, or 20.1 percent of the adult Nova Scotia population, and 6,210 children with disabilities, or 3.8 percent of children.

As in all previous Statistics Canada surveys, the disability rate for Nova Scotia in 2001 was higher

than any other province in Canada at 20.1 percent, and almost 6% higher than the Canadian average of 14.6 percent. Quebec had the lowest disability rate at less than half the Nova Scotia rate at 9.8 percent.

TABLE 1

DISABILITY RATE AND POPULATION SIZE FOR CANADA, PROVINCES 2001

		NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	
CANADA AND PROVINCES	Disability Rate (%) 15+ Years	15+ Years	Total
CANADA	14.6	3,420,340	3,601,270
Nova Scotia	20.1[1]	146,000	152,210
Newfoundland & Labrador	14.1	57,690	60,490
Prince Edward Island	17.0	18,030	18,970
New Brunswick	16.9	98,530	102,860
Quebec	9.8	568,800	595,690
Ontario	16.0	1,436,040	1,514,380
Manitoba	16.9	139,660	147,520
Saskatchewan	17.3	118,730	124,210
Alberta	14.8	331,760	354,740
British Columbia	16.3	505,090	530,130

[1] Please note that 20. 1 % is for adult persons with disabilities 15 years + . The rate for all age categories for Nova Scotia is 17.1 %

Table 2 provides the disability rate and number of persons by age and sex for Nova Scotia, in 2001. Disability rate increases with age, and in Nova Scotia in 2001, approximately 50 percent of all persons over the age of 65 reported having a disability.

In addition, of the 146,000 adults having a disability in Nova Scotia, 67,920 were male and 78,080 were female.

TABLE 2

DISABILITY RATES AND NUMBERS FOR ADULTS AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER, BY SEX AND AGE GROUPS, NOVA SCOTIA 2001

	PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES					
	TOTAL	%	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
Age Groups						
Total - Aged 15 years and over	146,000	20.1	67,920	19.5	78,080	20.6
15-64	87,310	14.4	43,360	14.6	43,940	14.1
15-24	6,190	5.3	3,080	5.3	3,110	5.4
25-44	26,200	9.9	12,580	9.9	13,630	10.0
45-64	54,910	24.1	27,710	24.8	27,210	23.4
65 and Over	58,690	49.3	24,560	48.0	34,130	50.2
65-74	26,020	39.7	12,020	39.3	14,000	40.1
75 and over	32,670	61.0	12,540	61.1	20,130	60.9

One of the advantages of the new 2001 PALS survey is a more comprehensive analysis of the types of disabilities in Canada. In addition to hearing, seeing, speech, mobility and agility used in the previous reports; Statistics Canada has added pain, learning, memory, developmental and psychological to the list of types of disabilities in Canada.

The most reported types of disabilities in Nova Scotia were mobility disability (105,970), pain (103,150), and agility disability (96,580).

Table 3 provides the disability rates for adults aged 15 years and over, by degree of severity, for Canada and the Provinces. In addition to having the highest disability rate in Canada, the new PALS survey found that Nova Scotia had the highest percentage of Severe and Very Severe levels of disability in Canada.

TABLE 3

DISABILITY RATES FOR ADULTS AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER, BY DEGREE OF SEVERITY, FOR CANADA AND PROVINCES 2001

	DEGREE OF SEVERITY - PERCENT				
	Total	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very Severe
Canada	14.6	5.0	3.6	3.9	2.0
Nova Scotia	20.1	6.8	5.3	5.3	2.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	14.1	4.5	3.7	3.7	2.2
Prince Edward Island	17.0	6.4	4.9	3.8	1.9
New Brunswick	16.9	5.6	4.5	4.7	2.1
Quebec	9.8	3.0	2.3	2.8	1.7
Ontario	16.0	5.2	3.9	4.5	2.3
Manitoba	16.9	6.2	4.6	4.0	2.0
Saskatchewan	17.3	6.9	4.2	4.6	1.7
Alberta	14.8	5.7	3.8	3.7	1.6
British Columbia	16.3	6.0	4.3	3.9	2.0

A full statistical profile of persons with disabilities and a resource directory of government programs and services is available from the office of the disabled Persons Commission at no charge.